

DPW UPDATE

April 2002

Support Services Staff: Sensible, Successful

By Jessica Eslinger, Staff Writer

Some people define “support staff” as operators or receptionists: employees who take care of the tasks others don’t have time for. This might be true in some cases, but not in DPW. Sandra Helmer, Katie Seifert and Leah Tully are vital to maintaining the efficiency and overall success of this department. They *are* Support Services.

“We work with just about every DPW section,” said Seifert. “One day we’ll be dealing with a move for Construction, the next a telephone issue in Division II.”

Seifert is senior clerk. Her duties include coordinating the department’s cell phone, land phone and pager inventories in addition to providing backup for the information desk.



Sandra Helmer and Katie Seifert



Leah Tully at the DPW Information Desk

She started out as a student worker in Land Development, then worked for Transportation before spending six months with the Auditor and Controller and winding up here. “I try to bring a helpful and optimistic attitude to work every day,” said Seifert.

That is pretty important considering the abundance of unusual projects she and her surrounding staff undertake.

Recently, Seifert received a call from a frantic Escondido resident whose horse was missing from her property. Helmer returned the call to gather more information, and after three hours of extensive research, Seifert and Helmer were able to locate the horse, to the owner’s relief.

Helmer, supervising clerk, has been with the County for almost 14 years, half with DPW. As head of the section, she oversees a wealth of tasks; she submits work requests for County-owned facilities, coordinates office moves and remodels, coordinates telephones, procurement and security cards, and provides overall supervision and support for her colleagues.

“Support Services provides excellent customer service to our fellow employees,” said Helmer.

She claims the biggest perk of her job is being able to work with a very enjoyable group of people. She oversees four student workers and is quick to recognize their support, roles and accomplishments.

Along with Helmer and Seifert, Tully believes “Teamwork is important and everyone is very supportive of each other.”

As the intermediate clerk typist at the information desk and publications clerk, Tully is the first contact for many callers and visitors to DPW. She orders and sells publications and subscriptions to the public, issues the department’s pool vehicles, and coordinates hiring temporary staff in addition to her basic administrative duties and sorting mail for all of COC.

Tully spent 10 years with DPW’s Financial Services Section. Before that, she worked for the County Health and Human Services Agency. She moved to Support Services in December.

Seifert, Helmer and Tully aim to get things done in a speedy, professional, friendly manner. Their coworkers say their attitude is a good example of quality customer service.

DIVISION NEWS

Transportation

DPW STEPS UP DURING TRAGEDY



When mourners came to pay their respects at the Dehesa Road site where Danielle Van Dam was found, Transportation Division people went to work.

Volunteer fire fighters had built a temporary set of steps so visitors could get to the top of a steep embankment where a makeshift memorial was growing hourly. But hundreds of people showed up in the first hours taxing the limits of the stairway. Kenton Jones of Traffic monitored the situation.

It quickly became obvious that the steps needed to be stronger. Roger Robledo, Larry Whattoff, Gary Paredes and Gary Giardina of Roads built heavy-duty

steps to handle the larger number of visitors.

More than 1,000 people came by to pay their respects during that first weekend.

Engineering

PIPE “GROWS” AT COC

People stared with curiosity. Engineers offered suggestions on planting requirements. Flood Control staff just smiled.

The brown pipe with antennae shooting from the top is actually a gage to measure rainfall in Kearny Mesa.

When measurable precipitation falls, the device measures the amount and sends a radio signal with the data to a receiver on the roof of Building 2 at COC. It's then downloaded onto computers for distribution.

“When your favorite TV weatherperson says ‘1.25 inches of rain fell in Kearny Mesa...’ you know where the information came from,” said Rand Allan, associate meteorologist, Flood Control.

The installation was made necessary when Flood Control moved from the Ruffin Road Annex to COC.



Financial Services

REVEALING THE BUDGET PROCESS

By Donna Turbyfill, Management Services

You think the holidays are busy. Try being a financial analyst at budget time! Department of Public Works central and program analysts have been frantically working to prepare budgets for approximately 125 funds and 200 separate budget units (Low Orgs), due March 22.

DPW is unique to the County as it uses virtually no County General Fund money in its \$190 million-plus budget. In addition, it is the only County department that budgets at an activity level. This makes budget time complex and challenging and at least twice the workload of most other departments.

This year, the Operational Plan (as the budget is known) is complicated further by the fact that all Orgs, Funds and accounts have been converted from the County's old accounting system to new Oracle numbers.

As if that isn't enough, DPW Financial Services Section has added steps to the process this year. In an effort to be more aware of programs financial needs, central staff have been meeting directly with program managers and analysts to identify and resolve budget issues.

“We hope that this will make a higher quality product and that the entire effort is transparent to line staff,” said Wanda Rawlings, DPW's Budget Coordinator. Our objective is to have money available to get the real work done.

For those of you unfamiliar with the budget process, there will be an opportunity to make some adjustment to the FY 2002-04 Operational Plan in May. Public Hearing will occur during the first half of June, with Board Deliberations and Approval tentatively scheduled for June 24 -28.